

## MINUTES

The Town of Manteo Board of Commissioners held their recessed October 7, 2020 meeting on October 21, 2020 at Town Hall, 407 Budleigh Street, Manteo, NC and via teleconference.

The following members were present:

- Mayor Bobby Owens
- Mayor Pro-Tem Betty Selby
- Commissioner Christine Walker
- Commissioner Richie Burke
- Commissioner Jason Borland
- Commissioner Eddie Mann

The following members were absent: Commissioner Darrell Collins

Also present at the meeting were:

- Town Manager James Ayers
- IT Director Carl Woody
- Town Planner Melissa Dickerson
- Deputy Town Clerk Jamie Whitley

Mayor Owens called the recessed October 7, 2020 meeting to order at 5:00 pm and Mr. Ayers did a roll call: Mayor Bobby Owens-present; Mayor Pro-Tem Selby-present; Commissioner Burke-present; Commissioner Borland-present; Commissioner Mann-present; Commissioner Collins-absent; Commission Walker-present.

**PRESENTATIONS**

**Employee Service Award** – Mr. Ayers is pleased to recognize Jonique Lee as he celebrates 10 years of service. Jonique worked in the automotive field prior to entering public service here at the Town of Manteo. He started off in Public Works, and he transferred later to the Water and Sewer Department. Jonique is committed to professional development, and he currently holds operator licenses at the following levels: B Distribution (drinking water), Collections 1 (sewer), and Cross Connection Control (drinking water). Outside of normal work orders, Jonique handles the majority of our 811-locate tickets. In fact, he has been our primary lift station inspector for the last four years.

**Presentation on First Friday and Special Events – Dare County Art Council** – Mr. Ayers introduced and welcomed Mr. Chris Sawin, Executive Director of the Dare County Arts Council (DCAC). Mr. Sawin came to talk about the partnership between the Town of Manteo and DCAC for the purpose of promoting Manteo both as a wonderful place to live and also as a great destination for visitors. He is requesting authorization to use budgeted funds that have been approved for First Friday to be used on a new initiative called “The Courthouse Sessions”.

In an effort to support the arts and artists during this uncertain and challenging time, DCAC reached out to some of their loyal supporters and sponsors to get funding to buy digital equipment to create digital platforms for teachers, musicians, and artists. The Courthouse Sessions is First Friday done digitally. DCAC does not take any funds from this program but what they do is live stream performances by local Outer Banks artists every week. In April, they

started the program with a performance by Manteo Musical Artist Bill Rea and his family. They helped them make money with a virtual tip jar. The artists have done extremely well and in a lot of cases, they have made more money than they would have if they had performed live. He gave an example of how Jonny Waters was able to raise over \$1,500 by doing a live performance remotely at his father's house. He was able to start a new charitable foundation in the name of his brother-in-law who had just passed away from cancer. This program has become very successful and people are tuning in from all over the world. When First Friday can start back up again, they will have First Friday and The Courthouse Sessions to show people all over the world how awesome Manteo is because more people in the world are interested in the culture of the Outer Banks than ever before.

He proposed using the First Friday funds for The Courthouse Sessions to pay musicians until First Friday can start over again. He wanted permission to change the tagline on the advertising to Live from Downtown Manteo, NC, and have sponsored by the Town of Manteo as the largest logo. The seed money has been spent and he is hoping that the Town of Manteo will continue to fund this amazing program.

Mayor Owens commended Mr. Sawin and gave his support for this program.

Commissioner Burke asked Mr. Ayers how can we expedite this issue.

Mr. Ayers responded that \$6,000 is currently budgeted for this under Cultural Affairs. This can be brought before the Board at their next meeting to widen the scope of the allocation so that it would not be limited to First Friday. He will come up with the appropriate language if the Board chooses to consider this at their next meeting and vote on it.

Mayor Pro-Tem Selby asked if The Courthouse Sessions has just local artists.

Mr. Sawin responded that just like First Friday, this is to showcase local artists but sometimes they do pepper the program with other artists in North Carolina. They had a group perform from Greensboro, a performance that showcased over 20 performers from all over North Carolina and they will have an artist from Williamston that will be performing for the Veterans program. They had 3 out of about 25 performances that had artists that were not local to the Outer Banks.

Mayor Pro-Tem Selby asked if they will get paid the same as if they were performing live.

Mr. Sawin responded that it is their intent but he thinks they will get paid more because of the virtual tip jar. He mentioned how \$1,500 was raised for an hour's performance. They will pay them the standard rate which is around \$100-\$200 per musician per performance plus they get the money from the virtual tip jar.

Commissioner Walker misses First Friday and commended Mr. Sawin for keeping this program going. She is in favor of doing whatever can be done to support First Friday and the musicians.

Commissioner Borland commended Mr. Sawin. He tuned in to some of The Courthouse Sessions and thought they were great. People can learn from what the DCAC is doing and hopefully,

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artists will be able to make more money by doing both the digital and live performances. He is looking forward to supporting this.

Commissioner Mann responded that Mr. Sawin is doing a great job.

This will be on the November 4 Agenda and Mr. Ayers will do the staff report for the Board's consideration.

Mayor Owens suggested that the Board may want to put a little more money into this program if we can afford it due to the circumstances. He agreed with Commissioner Walker that we really need to support this program.

**Department Head Reports** –The Department Head written reports were given to the Board and are available on our website at [manteonc.gov](http://manteonc.gov) for the general public to review. We are anticipating having more videos and presentations coming up in the following months including a special presentation from the Manteo Police Department (PD) at the November recessed workshop.

**Update on Town Sponsored Events** – Mr. Ayers read a quote by Agnes Pahro, "What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future." He reminisced fondly on last year's holiday events with the children, choirs, and the community coming together joyfully. We must have courage now as we endure a pandemic that has seized the present day. He is hopeful that 2021 will bring a time where we can have the events and activities that will bring our community together.

In relation to 2020, the Governor announced today that we will have 3 more weeks in this current phase of restrictions. We have received information from the State and County authorities including our County Health Director and it is clear that we will not be able to hold events that gather crowds or even large groups. We have received communications from other towns and cities around the State and Christmas Parades and related activities are being canceled due to the Covid-19 public health emergency and state-level restrictions. Therefore, it is with deep sadness that he must recommend the cancellation of the Christmas Parade, the Tree Lighting Ceremony, and the New Year's Eve Celebration. However, we have been working diligently with key stakeholders to come up with activities to promote holiday spirit here in Manteo. Based on the Board's feedback, we will bring a full slate of events at the next Board meeting, two weeks from today.

**Suggested Events:**

- **Food Drive:** Giving back and donating food to benefit all three food pantries here in town. Manteo PD and town staff will lead the charge.
- **Decorations:** Working with volunteers and groups, such as the Roanoke Island Garden Club, to enhance the decorations and lights around town.
- **The Annual Wreath Contest:** We could promote the organizations participating in the contest via the website, social media, and even the local newspaper.
- **The Lighting of the Christmas Tree:** We will find a way to light the Town Christmas Tree including a video and we will make sure that people will have a chance to visit the lit tree and take any photos to keep up any holiday traditions.

- **Personal Tree Lightings:** We would like to work with residents so they can share their own tree lighting or other traditions such as lighting the Menorah.
- **Residential Decorating Contest:** We will have a decorating contest around town. We will receive photos from participants and draw three winners at random to win prizes. This will give someone with one light just as much of a chance to win as someone with 100 lights.
- **Business Decorating Contest:** We would like to sponsor a merchant window decorating contest to draw people to our local businesses. Businesses will submit photos to the Town and they will be entered to win a prize.
- **Holiday Spirit Contest:** For the residents and businesses that cannot enter into the decorating contest, we can have a category for holiday performances that can range from a short video of a family singing around a piano to a solo dance recital.
- **Santa's Mailbox:** The decorated mailbox will be located at the Town Christmas Tree where kids can drop off their letters to Santa. Santa can be filmed randomly picking letters from the mailbox which will be posted on social media leading up to Christmas.
- **Santa Claus is coming to Town:** Santa will be riding through the neighborhoods of Manteo to greet the children.

In each contest example, we would do a random drawing for three \$100 gift certificates. We want to make sure that there is no objection from the Board to the gift certificates. We would remind the prize winners to consider shopping locally. With ideas like these and more, we hope to promote the holiday spirit throughout the community and beyond.

Mayor Owens mentioned how sad it is that we cannot have the events and activities that we normally have for the Holidays but thought Mr. Ayers's ideas were excellent.

Commissioner Walker was impressed and thought that the ideas were great. We can't have large gatherings but there are other ways to show our spirit and bring people to town safely.

Commissioner Borland agreed with Mayor Owens and Commissioner Walker and commended Mr. Ayers on doing a great job. We have to do something for the holidays and Mr. Ayers has done a lot of work figuring out things that can be done. It will make the holiday season how it is supposed to be in Manteo.

Mr. Ayers recognized that these ideas came from staff, stakeholders, former participants, and subcommittee members. This was a real group effort and he is thankful for all of the team's contributions.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

*Members of the public are invited to address the Board of Commissioners on any topic. Public Comment is not intended to require the Board to answer any impromptu questions or to take any action on items brought up during the public comment period. Speakers will address all the comments to the Board as a whole and not one individual Commissioner. Discussions between speakers and members of the audience will not be allowed. Time limits are 3 minutes per person or 5 minutes per group. Please identify yourself and location so that your statements can be recorded.*

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No one from the public wished to address the Board.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Procurement of Materials for the Town Common**

The Town has a contractor under contract for the Town Common project. There was a pre-construction meeting with the contractor today. They have provided the bonds and we have provided them with a notice to proceed. As part of this agreement, the town is expected to provide some of the materials. The reason why the Town will supply some materials is to make sure that they match our existing materials such as the light poles and fixture. We are still well under budget on this project. The Town Planner procured these items in accordance with the North Carolina General Statutes for procurement. The value of these items is above \$30,000 therefore it requires Board authorization for the Town Manager to enter into a purchase order or contract for these items.

Staff has received the following informal quotes for lights and bollards for the Town Common:

#### **Light Poles:**

Bright Ideas Lighting and Design - \$41,618.62

Lighting Dimensions Associates - \$44,824.33

Outer Banks Electric - \$45,304.70

#### **Bollards:**

Bright Ideas Lighting and Design - \$28,053.90

Lighting Dimensions Associates - \$31,256.00

Outer Banks Electric - \$32,665.50

Bright Ideas Lighting and Design is owned by Tony Gomez of Southern Shores, Lighting Dimensions Associates is out of Norfolk, VA, and Outer Banks Electric is here in Manteo, NC.

Mayor Owens asked if the lights will match the lights down by the lighthouse.

The lights that will be installed will match those that are down by the lighthouse because they will be the same lights.

Commissioner Burke asked if the company providing the lights had insurance.

The company that we are purchasing the lights from does not have to have a license because we are only purchasing the lights from them and the lights will be installed by our licensed contractor.

We are going with the low bid from Bright Ideas Lighting and Design. We have worked with this company previously.

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A motion was made by Commissioner Walker and seconded by Commissioner Borland to authorize the Town Manager to execute a contract or purchase order for the Town of Manteo provided items as described on the Town Common plans and any amendments within the allocated budget. The motion was approved by the following roll call vote: Ayes: Mayor Pro-Tem Selby, Commissioners Mann, Borland, Burke, and Walker. Nays: None. Absent: Commissioner Collins. **Motion carried unanimously.**

#### MAYOR/COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

**Commissioner Borland:** He had mentioned it before about the holiday activities and he knows that we will talk more about it at the next meeting but the Board did vote to have a Special Events Committee. Mr. Ayers and the town staff have done an excellent job with planning these activities but he feels like they are going to need help with the execution of these upcoming events. He doesn't see why we couldn't add members to that team at the next meeting.

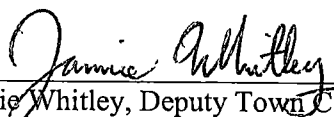
**Commissioner Mann:** He heard from the Dean of the College of the Albemarle (COA) here in Manteo, Tim Sweeney. He is committed to making the COA in Manteo look and feel like it belongs in the Town of Manteo. He appreciates their commitment to making sure that the school looks like that and he is excited for the progress that is happening with the school as well as the Town Common. There is a lot of progress physically going on in the Town of Manteo.

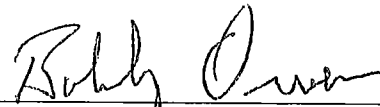
**Commissioner Walker:** The County Commissioners have brought up affordable housing and she believes that goes hand in hand with the COA project. She is in support of whatever we can do to help with that. We have to get a handle on this situation to make it affordable for students to be able to live here and attend college. It is going to be such a great facility and that is the only problem that she can foresee. She appreciates Mr. Ayers keeping the Board in the loop.

There being no further business to come before the Board or other persons to be heard a motion was made by Commissioner Mann and seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Selby the meeting was adjourned at 5:37 pm was approved by the following roll call vote: Ayes: Ayes: Mayor Pro-Tem Selby, Commissioners Mann, Borland, Burke, and Walker. Nays: None. Absent: Commissioner Collins. **Motion carried unanimously.**

This the 21<sup>st</sup> day of October 2020

ATTEST:

  
Jamie Whitley, Deputy Town Clerk

  
Bobby Owens, Mayor

